## Introduction

- 6.7 million patients live with Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementias (ADRD) in the USA\(^1\)
- $334 billion/year in healthcare costs for dementias patients\(^1\)
- Dementia simulations improve compassion and empathy in providers and caregivers\(^2,3\)
- Agency for Healthcare and Research Quality recommends including pharmacists in ADRD care teams\(^4\)
- Limited knowledge of pharmacist training in ADRD
- No studies evaluating change in ADRD empathy in USA pharmacy students

## Methods

- UGA College of Pharmacy partnered with Second Wind Dreams to provide a Virtual Dementia Tour (VDT) to 140 second-year pharmacy students

### Figure 1. Schematic of students’ activities before, during, and after the dementia simulation.

**Statistical Methods:**
- Related-Samples McNemar Change Test performed on dichotomous survey questions
- Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test performed on Likert-scale survey questions

## Results

### Community Survey Question Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre-Survey (%)</th>
<th>Post-Survey (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do people with dementia get the care they need?</td>
<td>5.84(\uparrow)</td>
<td>29.29(\downarrow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you relaxed?</td>
<td>82.14(\uparrow)</td>
<td>97.86(\downarrow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel capable of carrying out simple tasks?</td>
<td>40.88(\uparrow)</td>
<td>70.39(\downarrow)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\uparrow p < 0.001\) for all survey responses

### Healthcare Survey Question Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre-Survey (median)</th>
<th>Post-Survey (median)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In your opinion, do people with dementia get the care they need? (Never = 1 to Yes =5)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy is it for a person with dementia to get through the day? (Unbearable = 1 to Very Easy = 5)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your current state of relaxation? (Agitated = 1 to Very Relaxed = 5)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From a physical standpoint, how capable do you feel of carrying out simple tasks? (Not Capable = 1 to Very Capable =5)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel you understand the emotional needs of our elders with dementia? (Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree =5)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\uparrow p < 0.001\) for all survey responses

## Themes

### Empathy

- I’m able to understand dementia patients better now and am able to be more empathetic to their experience. Although I’m not sure I’ve ever met anyone with dementia, knowing what potential patients or their family members may be experiencing is really valuable.

### Patient Care and Advocacy

- [My role as a pharmacist is] To optimize medication regimens for patients with dementia not only with their dementia meds but all other medications. This means making things simpler for them by trying to minimize how many medications a patient is on everyday along with making it easier for the patient to remember and to take the medications.

### Education and Awareness

- I am now more aware of the help that people living with dementia need. I will pay more attention to the needs of people who are diagnosed with dementia, both in my family and in my pharmacy

## Conclusion

- Preliminary data indicate significant change in pharmacy students’ empathy towards ADRD after participating in VDT
- Implementing VDT into Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum can better prepare for students to care for patients with ADRD
- Further investigation is needed to determine long-term impact of VDT on pharmacy students

## References